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ABSTRACT

This booklet is the fourth in a series that examines community school centers. The development and substance of the building program, issues related to site selection and development, and overall building design strategies are examined. Also discussed are particularly important design details about which the programming committee and the architect should be aware. (Author/MLF)

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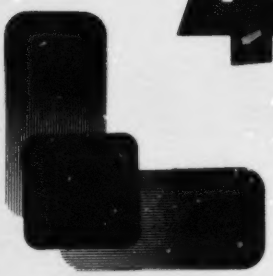
FACILITY ISSUES IN COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

#4 in a series of 6 booklets prepared by EFL



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Community school centers have evolved from many experiments in interagency cooperation and community involvement. One line of descent has been from the community education movement, which has long advocated that schools assume a leading role in expanding and coordinating community services and that education itself be broadly inclusive of all age groups, subject matter, and experience. Another line of descent has been from the parks and recreation fields which pioneered in developing park-schools as coordinated facilities and sites, with shared responsibilities in recreational programming. A third line of descent has been in the movement for citizen participation in government and planning, for which citizen activists and enlightened government officials are due credit.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, which supported the preparation and publication of this series of reports on community school centers. The foundation has long been in the forefront of the community education field and has supported and encouraged community participation and community-based solutions to social problems.

Sincere thanks are due to the planners and participants in over 70 community school centers across the country who have shared with us their experiences, hopes, frustrations, and knowledge. Without this front-line reporting, this series would not be possible. We also thank the individual experts who provided advice and knowledge, and who read and reacted to early drafts.

Major responsibility for researching and writing this series was taken by EFL's Ellen Bussard.

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COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

FOREWORD

Our society is in the midst of change and challenge:

- The make up of our population is shifting, in that there are fewer school-age children, more elderly people, more working mothers, and more people retiring before age 65 and seeking "something to do."
- Ordinary citizens are seeking a greater role in determining our own collective future.
- We are becoming aware of the value of recycling and preserving community resources rather than laying waste and starting over.
- Continuing fiscal crises are challenging public institutions to seek ways of providing services for less money through more intensive use of available resources and cooperative planning.

Community school centers stand at the crossroads of these trends. Whether housed in recycled school buildings or in new facilities cooperatively planned and financed, these centers are becoming a focus of community and neighborhood life. These centers may include libraries, health clinics, elementary or secondary schools, swimming pools and other recreation facilities, day care centers, senior citizen services or other people-serving agencies. They may also be places where community organizations, social clubs, and union locals hold regular meetings and special events. In some, families and friends gather for reunions and baby showers. In common, they may be described as "people centers"; they provide a focus for community life.

This booklet is one in a series that examines community school centers as a phenomenon of national importance to the coordinated delivery of social services, better use of public resources, and revitalization of community life. ■

1 **A Concerned Citizen's Guide to Community School Centers**

2 **Planning Community School Centers**

3 **Managing Community School Centers**

4 **Facility Issues in Community School Centers**

5 **Using Surplus School Space for Community School Centers**

6 **A Resource Book on Community School Centers**

FACILITY ISSUES IN COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

INTRODUCTION

The design of a community school center is as important as reaching agreement on its overall goals and developing the center's coordinated management. There are six basic options from which to choose when designing facilities to house a school, service agencies, and the community:

- use existing school facilities after hours for non-school functions
- use surplus space in an existing school for non-school functions (this is called parallel use)
- build or renovate facilities to provide school space, and separate community spaces paid for and operated with non-school funds
- build, add, or renovate space that is shared between school and community
- build or renovate separate spaces for school and community, and space shared by both
- convert a surplus school for use by a variety of agencies, some of which may be shared, so that no "school" space remains.

Often dictated by circumstance, the appropriate choice must nevertheless enable facilities to be designed that will accommodate the service goals of the center.

The major step between the preliminary planning and the design of a facility is the development of the building program. The program is a document which states as clearly as possible the requirements for the building--size and type of spaces, relationship between spaces, and quality of spaces; and the building constraints—budgets, codes, and laws.

The process of developing the building program, the program document, and the facilities' design must reflect the variety of requirements and views of its anticipated users. The program is usually written by a committee (including representatives of community organizations and participating agencies) and developed in conjunction with the center's administrative structure so that each reinforces the other.

It is essential during these stages that design planning be cooperative, and sensitive to the special needs of a community.

This booklet examines the development and substance of the building program, issues related to site selection and development, and overall building design strategies. It also examines particularly important design details about which the programming committee and the architect should be aware. ■

CONTENTS

The building program 6
What the document contains 6
Who writes the building program? 7
Developing the building program 8

The site 10
Site selection 10
Site development 11

Building design strategies 17
Building scale 17
Separation of school, shared, and community spaces 17
Agency sharing of community spaces 19
Energy conservation 20
Access for disabled people 20

Design details: Entrances 21

Design details: Reception 22

Design details: Interior orientation 23

Design details: Corridors 24

Design details: Modifying traditional spaces 25
Cafeterias 25
Gymnasiums 26

Design details: New kinds of spaces 27

Storage requirements for shared use 27

Furnishing for shared use 28

Designing for changing needs and growing demands 28
Reallocation of tenant space 28
Greater shared use of space 29
Building additions 29
Use of other facilities 29

Checklists for planning and designing facilities 30

The building program

What the document contains

The building program is a document that tells the design architect what the client requires the building to do and contain, and how much can be spent on it. It is the middle step between general planning, in which the goals, needs, and constraints are determined, and the final design of the building.

Building programs for community school centers are usually detailed and comprehensive. They can contain:

- general statements of philosophy and goals
- statements of the goals, purposes, and programs from each agency
- lists of spaces, their purposes and approximate areas
- locational and other relationships desired among spaces
- qualitative statements about mood, scale, character, feeling, etc.
- requirements for lighting, ventilation, heating, acoustics, electrical and other utilities
- equipment, storage, and furniture requirements
- the project budget, and any special financial constraints
- references to building, life safety, and other codes or regulations
- any miscellaneous design requirements.

AGENCY	SPACE	USER POPULATION	PROGRAMMED NET AREA	PARKING REQUIRED	EXTERIOR AREA	TIME OF NORMAL USE: DAYS	NIGHTS	ENDS
MULTI-USE SPACE	1) RECEPTION AREA		1,100 S.F.	13-17Staff ? Public	Outdoor Stage ?	X	X	X
	2) GROUP COUNSELING	10 max.	168 S.F.				X	X
	3) GROUP COUNSELING	10 max.	168 S.F.				X	X
	4) MEETING ROOM/BLDG STAFF LUNCH ROOM	30-40	1,200 S.F. (3 @ 400S.F.)				X	X
	5) ARTS & CRAFTS ROOM		Use School Facilities				X	X
	6) KITCHEN		150 S.F.				X	X
	7) MAINTENANCE OFFICE & LOCKERS W/SHOWER	1	200 S.F.				X	
	8) MAINTENANCE SHOP & GARAGE, RECEIVING & TRASH		900 S.F.				X	
	9) BUILDING STAFF TOILETS		200 S.F.				X	X
	10) BLDG & YARD STORAGE		750 S.F.				X	
	11) FLOATING OFFICE		144 S.F.				X	
			4,980 S.F.					

The building program for the North End Multi-Service Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, illustrates typical space requirements and uses.

Who writes the building program?

Developing the program for community school centers is usually the responsibility of a committee. The work of the committee is often guided by an architect or a facilities consultant who knows what issues should be considered.

To most laypeople, developing a building program is an unfamiliar experience. But if community residents and agency heads and staff are to be fully enfranchised partners in planning a center, everyone must participate in the programming process.

The consultant can be engaged simply to produce the building program, or to design the facility as well. In the first case, the document has to be thorough because a design architect unfamiliar with the job will have to work from it. In the second case, the architect has the advantage of knowing all the issues in depth, and the design process may move more rapidly.

Working with a client that is a committee representing a variety of agencies, organizations, and community residents may be a new experience for many architects. It is important that the program committee select an architect who is able and willing to work within this context. The architect's role is as much educator, negotiator, and facilitator as it is designer.

The composition of the building program committee reflects the philosophical orientation of the proposed center and the willingness of the agencies supplying construction funds to share decision-making powers.

If the center is planned to be a joint project by several agencies for, not with, the community, the committee is likely to be composed only of agency representatives, as at the John F. Kennedy School and Community Center in Atlanta.

If viewed primarily as a joint agency venture, but with some acknowledgement of community participation, the committee may have a single representative from an advisory council as well as representatives from each agency. This committee may hold occasional public meetings to get community views, to hear reactions to the proposed program, and later to gather reactions to the building design.

If, however, the center is viewed as belonging to the community as much as to the agencies, community residents will play a stronger and official role. The agencies putting up funds for construction have to concur in this view, of course. Two examples illustrate several versions of this kind of committee process.

For the Britannia Community Services Centre in Vancouver, a committee of six community residents and four senior agency representatives (school board, parks and recreation board, planning department, and department of social planning) developed the building program under the leadership of consultants. This committee took up all the issues and developed the program in eight months.

Planning for the Whitmer Human Resources Center in Pontiac, Michigan, was carried out in a more complex way that was intended to assure community initiative. A council of 36 residents convened public meetings and asked the print and broadcast media for coverage. All meetings were attended by an executive council representing all the public agencies. The meetings were led by the mayor and the public was encouraged to attend.

The meeting format was formal. The planning council of residents introduced topics of discussion, invited consultants to give presentations, and heard public opinions. The council then submitted recommendations to the agency executive committee. The agency committee acted only in response to council recommendations, which it could accept or veto. This council was responsible for developing the building program, as well as preliminary planning.

Pontiac developed this format to get as much public involvement as possible, to place the community in the role of initiator, and to ensure that

negotiations with agencies were carried out in a public forum. The entire process took 18 months from early planning through writing the program.

Another form of joint program development emphasizes the issues and tasks necessary for developing a center and de-emphasizes the differences between agency directors and community residents. The process is known as the critical path method. At a public meeting, a schedule of work (the critical path) is charted in which issues and tasks are identified, and dates established for accomplishing the tasks. Task forces, composed of officials and citizens, are formed by a combination of appointment, nomination, and volunteering. The task forces then meet concurrently and produce written programs for each set of issues. When this step is completed, all the task forces meet together to develop a single coordinated building program incorporating and modifying the task force programs. The process is facilitated by a consultant.

Developing the building program

The first task is to establish a schedule, and then to identify the steps to be taken, the decisions to be made, and the people who will make the decisions. The schedule will depend on whether the same group does all the programming in sequential steps, whether task forces are set up to study different issues concurrently, whether community people participate in the entire process or only at certain key meetings, and so on.

Whatever the schedule, and regardless of the composition of the planning group that writes the program, there are three key steps to developing a program:

- identifying specific needs of the participating organizations and of the whole center
- identifying ways of coordinating facility needs
- reconciling needs and alternative facility solutions with various constraints.

Step 1. Identifying needs. Each participating organization, in effect, writes its own building program. This should include space types and sizes, activities that must be accommodated, hours that spaces will be used, and all the constraints such as accustomed modes of operation, and desired relationships between spaces.

If the center is also to meet needs of groups and agencies not yet identified, or not actively participating in writing the program, the programming committee will also have to attempt to forecast space and function needs.

A different set of needs and desires will be identified for the center as a whole. Often the goals for establishing a center go beyond those of specific agencies to include such things as achieving a lively density of activities, serving as a social and physical link between two residential neighborhoods or between a residential neighborhood and a commercial center, or providing a means for greater contact between generations. These overriding goals will produce facility requirements which are distinct from those of the individual participants.

Step 2. Identifying ways of coordinating facility needs. One strategy is to examine the lists of spaces and schedules for overlapping needs. If two groups need a gymnasium, for example, can both groups be accommodated by building a single gymnasium. If several groups require conference rooms, can a single room serve them all if time schedules are juggled? Or will the demand be great enough that two or three rooms are needed? Or does one group really need its own conference room?

Another strategy is to examine the lists of functions and activities to identify similar or compatible functions which might be housed together. For example, most agencies require reception and waiting areas and a single area may serve all agencies. This approach often leads to consideration of new space configurations which differ from the traditional. Could alcoves in a dining area also ac-

commodate small meetings? Is it possible to house a number of similar functions in the same space, such as preparation of food for school children, senior citizens, the public, and cooking classes?

Step 3. Reconciling alternatives with constraints. The most obvious constraint is the amount of money available. But there may also be conditions on the available money which may lead to more separation of spaces, or duplication of some spaces to meet funding eligibility criteria.

Laws, codes, and other regulations may also influence the choice of alternatives. A day care center might have to be located on the first floor, with direct outside access. Health and building codes might prohibit sharing kitchens. If different codes establish minimum standards for facilities that are shared, the stricter standard will have to prevail.

Participants may vary in their willingness to accept alternatives requiring sharing of space. Three agencies might be willing to share conference space, but a fourth agency might not participate unless it has its own conference room. The agency providing construction funds may feel entitled to certain prerogatives. Situations of this sort will require delicate negotiation.

Very often the needs of individual participants and the goals of coordination may not mesh easily and will require compromise. It is particularly important to keep the needs of possible future users, and the needs attributable to the whole center in mind. Under pressure of making compromises, there will always be a tendency for people actively involved in planning to favor their own needs. The outside consultant, or community residents if they are members of the programming team, can assume a watchdog role.

When the building program is developed and approved by all the constituent parties, the architectural planning and design process can commence. If the architect has not been involved (it is hoped that the architect was participating, if not directing, the program development), now is the time to interview and select an architect to design the facilities. However, the committee responsible for programming should remain in place to review design proposals and to assure continuity between program and architectural interpretation. ■

The site

Site selection

The site may have been selected before programming starts because the choice of a site is frequently dictated by the availability or public ownership of a piece of land, or by the redevelopment of existing school facilities.

Nevertheless, several major criteria should be reviewed in selecting a site, or evaluating the feasibility of renovating a facility. At best, a site can be chosen which meets all criteria; at worst, remedial steps will have to be taken to counteract deficiencies in the site.

- **Accessibility to users.** A center must be conveniently located for people traveling on foot or bicycle, on public transit, and by automobile.
- **Relationship to other existing or proposed community facilities.** A site should be conveniently located to other community facilities that can be used in conjunction with the center. Such facilities might include a parking garage or lot, a municipal park or other recreation facilities, private agencies such as a YMCA, health clinic, and so on. For example, a site for one community school in Minneapolis was selected adjacent to an existing Boys Club, and was developed to include an underground passageway between the club and the school for sharing facilities.
- **Conformance to zoning codes.** Land zoned for commercial and industrial uses can be used for a center. Land zoned for residential uses may, with a special permit from the municipal zoning board, be used as a school. However, other occupants of community school centers, such as libraries, clinics, offices, senior citizens and recreation centers, may not qualify for special permission under the local zoning code.
- **Ease of sharing facilities with school component.** Although centers in renovated school buildings may have no regular school component, most new centers share facilities with a school. When there is to be extensive sharing, there are advantages and disadvantages to be considered for each grade level of school—elementary, high school, or middle or junior high school.

Elementary schools are the only schools that traditionally are oriented to their neighborhoods, but they have two drawbacks. The small size of furniture makes it difficult to accommodate adults, and elementary schools have few specialized spaces.

High schools have many specialized spaces, and the size of furniture presents no problems, but they tend to be large institutions with a wide service area. And high schools are often heavily used for school-related activities in the afternoons and evenings.

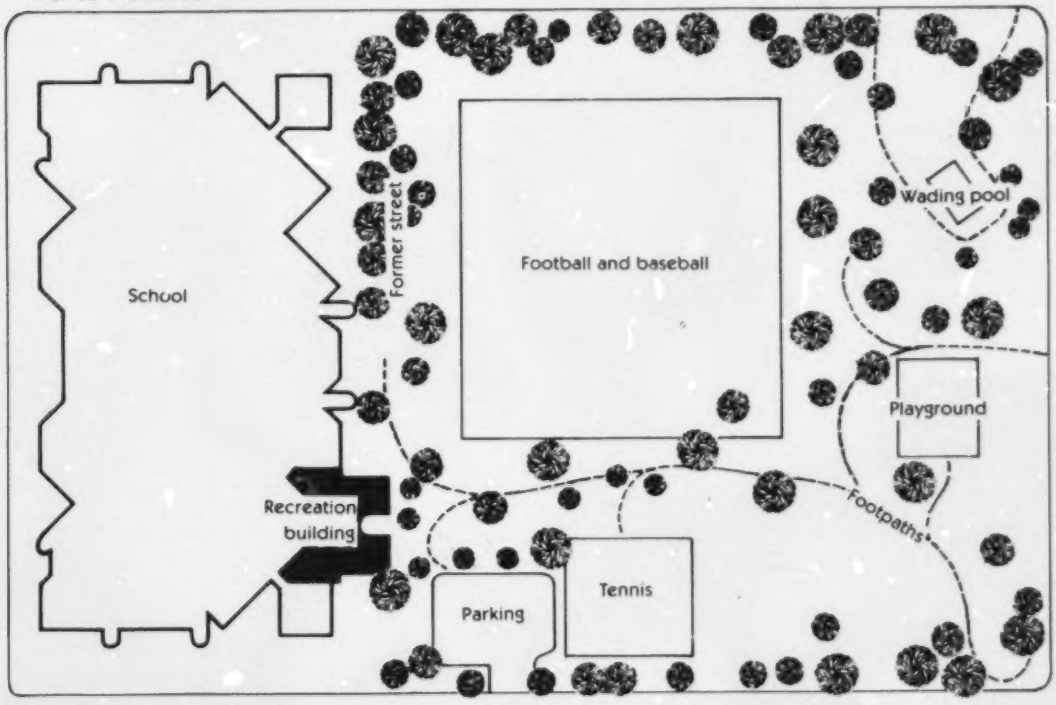
Middle schools also have specialized spaces and full-size furniture. They tend to be smaller and less heavily used after school than high schools. These reasons make middle schools attractive for inclusion in a community school center.

Site development

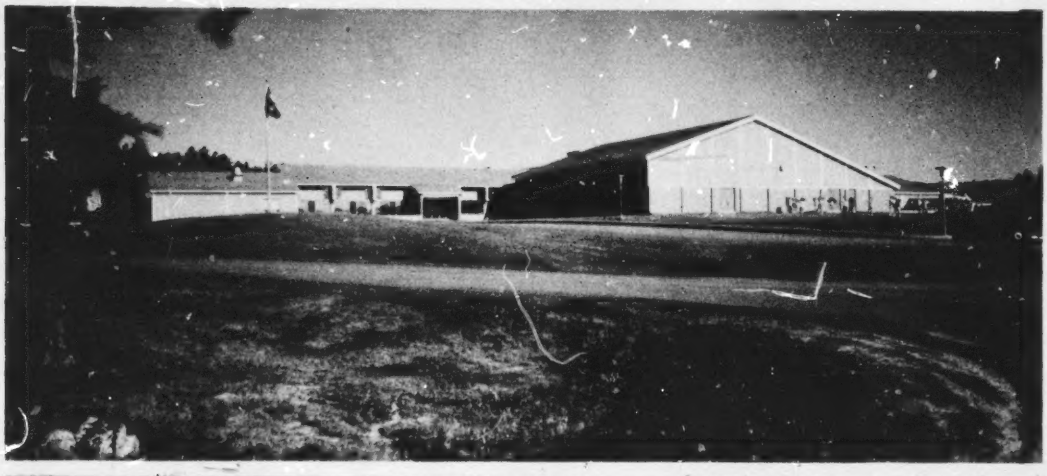
Several issues have to be considered when planning the development of a site:

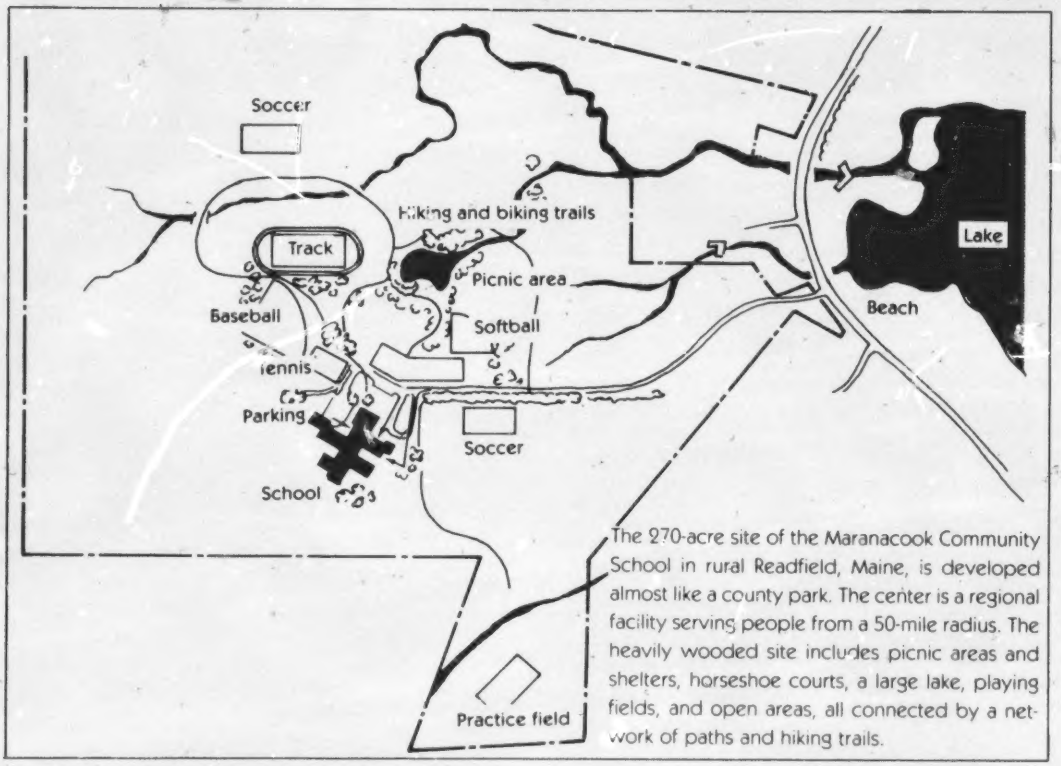
- the relationship between the center's facilities and grounds and the surrounding neighborhood
- how the grounds can serve the community as well as the school
- the number, size, and scale of the buildings
- access for residents by foot, bicycle, car, or public transportation
- provision of adequate parking facilities.

These issues are handled in a variety of ways, depending on the size and location of the site, the nature of the surrounding neighborhood, and transportation services.

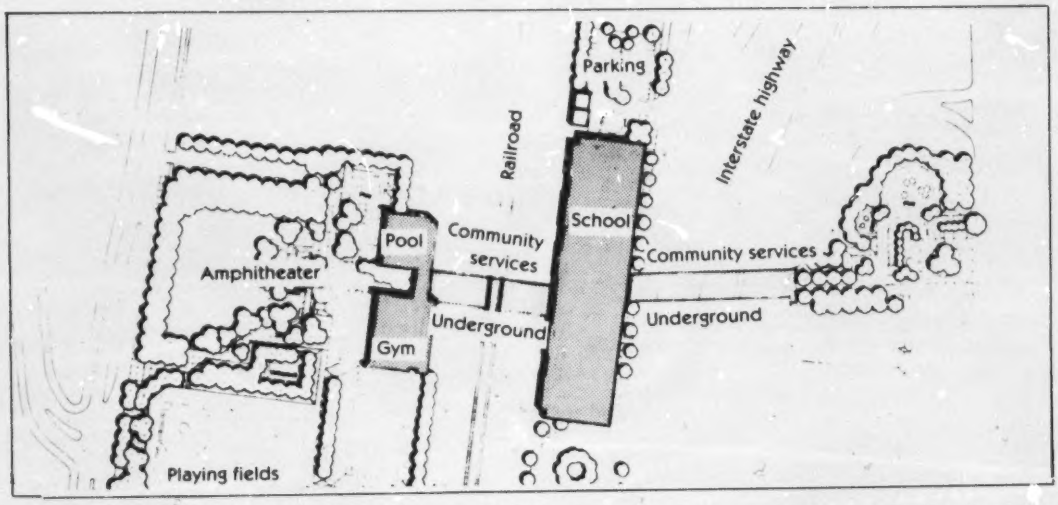


The Hans Christian Andersen School in Minneapolis is an expanded version of a park-school, a common development practice in the midwest. The planning committee selected a six-acre site adjacent to an existing six-acre city park and playground so that outdoor facilities would be available. The street between the school site and the park was closed to give the school direct access to the park. The city renovated the park and built a recreation building next to the school. Fortunately, the school did not need to build parking facilities because it secured a long-term lease for use of an adjacent hospital's parking garage.

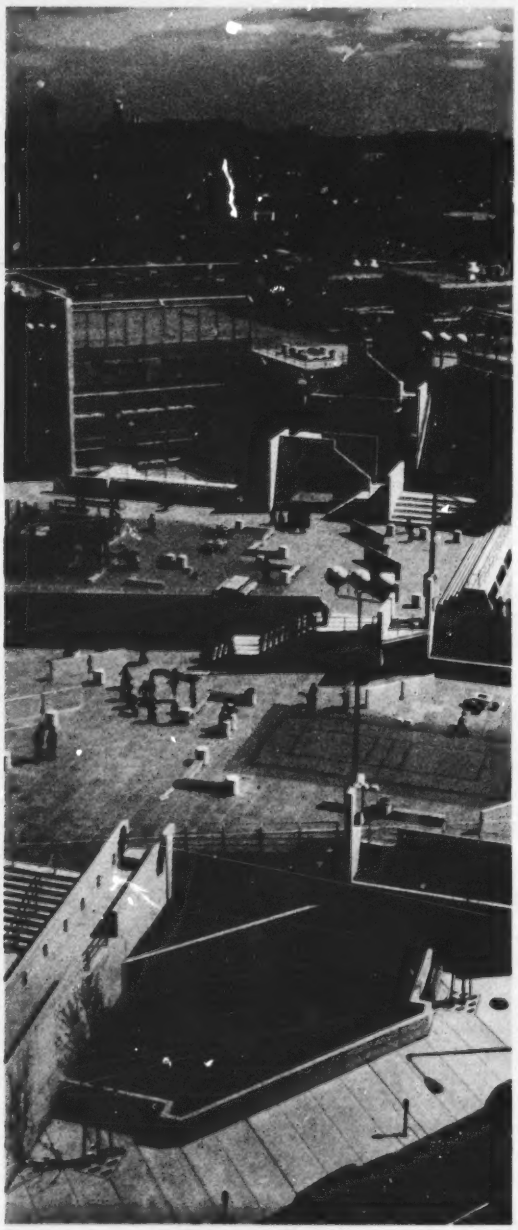


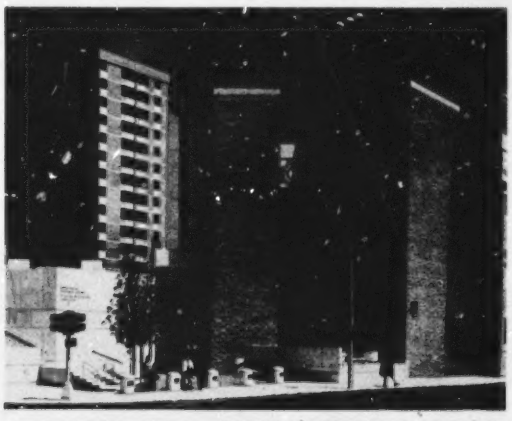


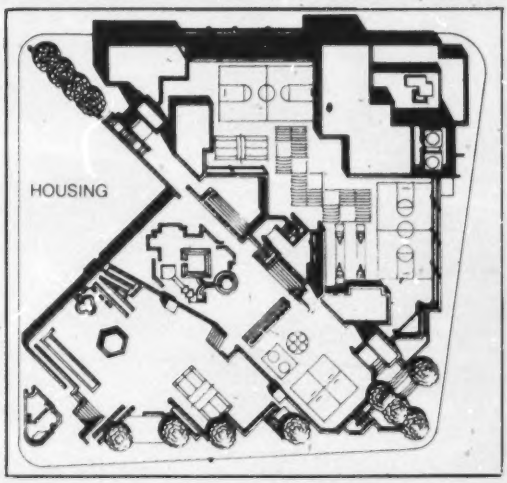
The 270-acre site of the Maranacook Community School in rural Readfield, Maine, is developed almost like a county park. The center is a regional facility serving people from a 50-mile radius. The heavily wooded site includes picnic areas and shelters, horseshoe courts, a large lake, playing fields, and open areas, all connected by a network of paths and hiking trails.



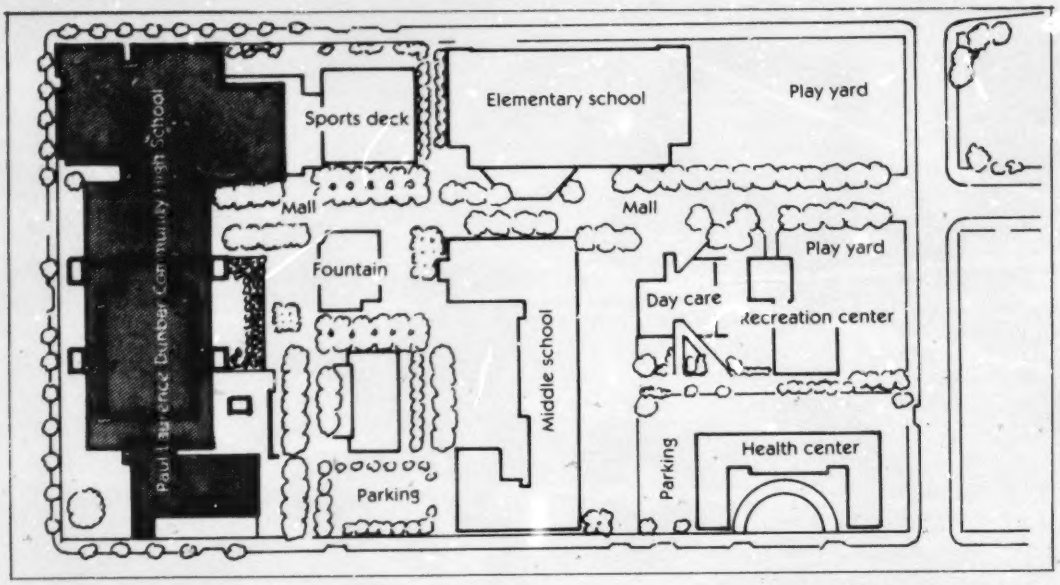
The site of the New North Community School in Springfield, Massachusetts, was chosen to draw together two neighborhoods divided by an interstate highway and a railroad. Some of the building is located underground in a former road underpass, and serves as a pedestrian right of way connecting the two neighborhoods. At each end of the underground portion of the center, land has been developed as community parks. The left side of the site, where more land was available, includes playing fields and a playground. On the right side, a small public park, more urban in character, provides a transition between the main commercial street and the ramped pedestrian entrance to the center.

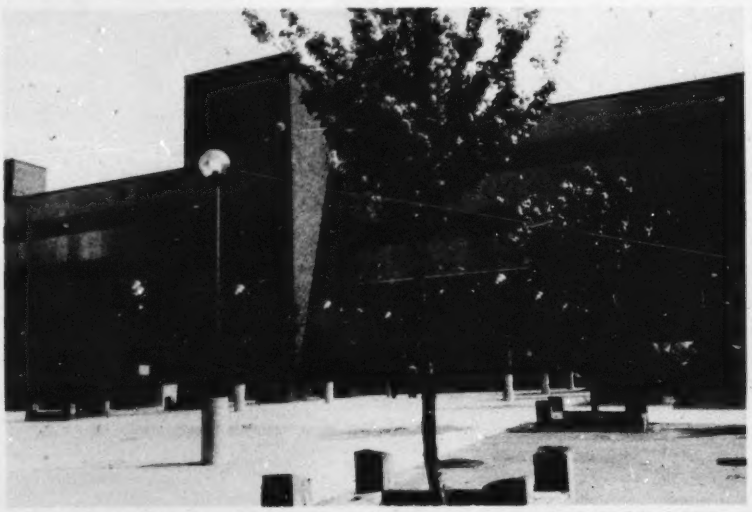






The Quincy Community School site in Boston covers most of a city block surrounded by large institutional buildings, hotels, a parking garage, and apartment buildings. One corner of the school block contains a high-rise apartment building for senior citizens. Because the small site does not allow any grounds, as such, the building is designed to provide a series of public roof spaces for community and school use. The roofs have a climbing structure with swings and tables and stools. A tiny plaza at the entrance to the center and the senior citizen apartments is a popular gathering place for the elderly.





The Dunbar High School center in Baltimore shares a super-block with other large public buildings (a recreation center, the former high school renovated as a middle school, an elementary school, a day care center, and a health center). Site development opened the interior of the large block into an urban plaza that is used for community events. Pathways across the plaza connect the buildings and also lead to the surrounding neighborhood on all sides. Most of the parking is on the streets.

The Britannia Community Services Centre was built on a large site containing a high school in an area of single-family houses in Vancouver. A major part of the site is reserved for playing fields, and the new facilities are located at one end. The planning committee developed facilities in keeping with the scale of surrounding homes. Instead of a single building, seven small buildings with separate functions cluster around paths and plazas.

Building design strategies

Building scale

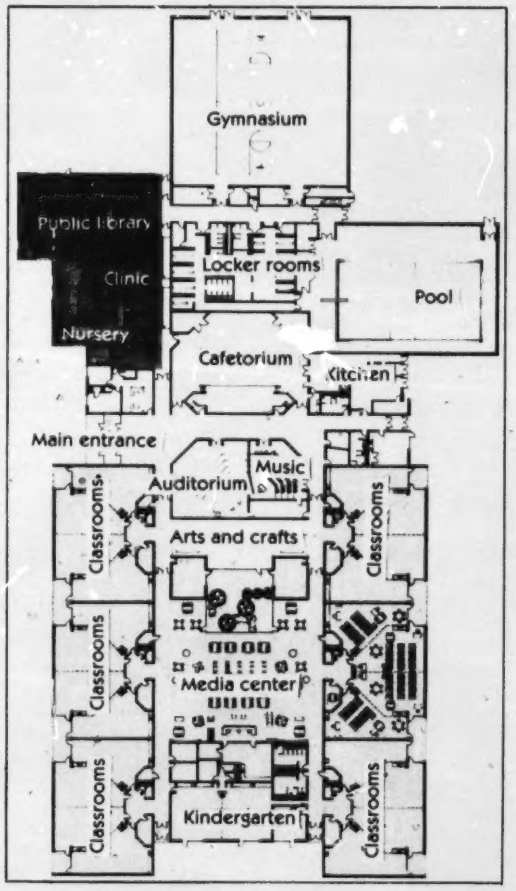
The issue of building size and scale may pose a problem for planners and architects. On one hand, community school centers attempt to counter large centralized institutions by creating small-scale facilities focused on the local community or neighborhood. Yet centers may also become large and complex institutions when a variety of services and programs are added to an already large high school or junior high school.

Part of the dilemma can be resolved by sensitive architectural planning and design. Instead of one large building, the center may be composed of a series of small interconnected buildings. Or, the building may be organized as a cluster of pavilions along a central mall or enclosed street. Sometimes the problem is resolved by adding units and remodeling facilities on an existing site. Whatever the approach, building scale that reflects the scale of the neighborhood and avoids the sense of "another big bureaucratic institution" is an important design consideration in the development of the building program.

Separation of school, shared, and community spaces

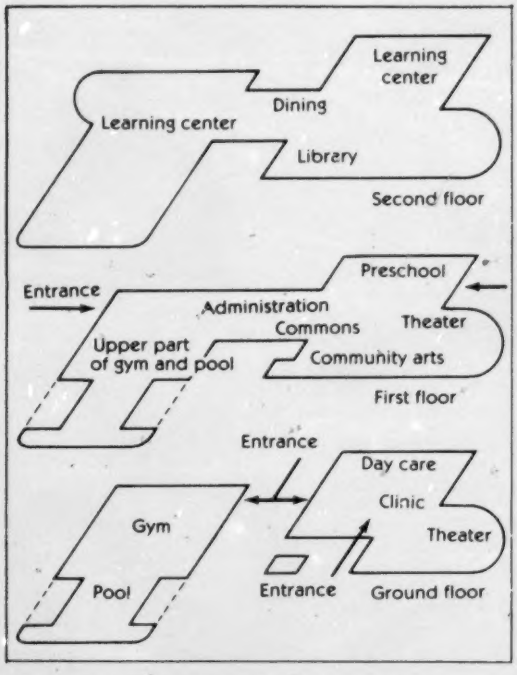
The most common practice in the interior layout of centers is to separate spaces intended for school use only, community use only, and shared use. The building's entrances, corridors, and security gates are designed so that each area can be used separately. Separate utility circuits are provided so that energy can be conserved by heating and lighting only the areas being used.

In a typical building, spaces intended for school use only, regular classrooms for the most part, are located on upper floors or in separate wings. There is greater concern for keeping the public out of classrooms than there is for keeping children out of community space, primarily for the safety of the children and to avoid disrupting classes.

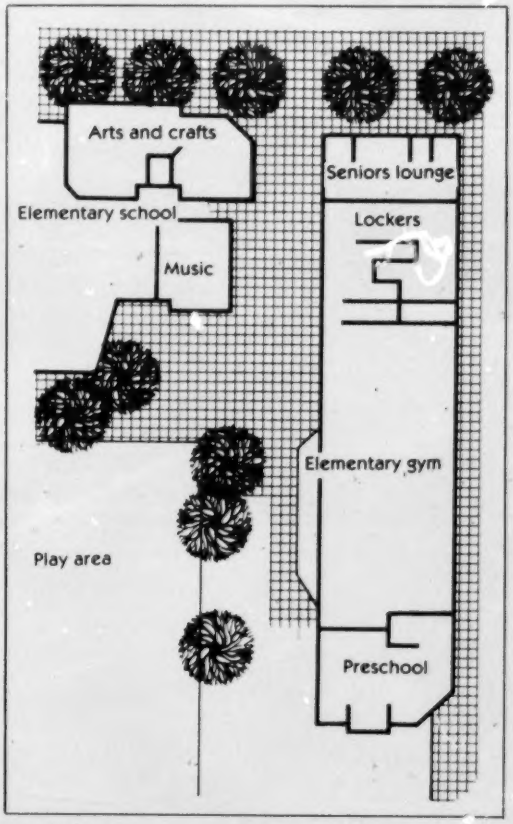


The Riverton Elementary School and Neighborhood Center on the outskirts of Portland, Maine, is zoned for school, shared, and community spaces in a single-story building. School and community share spaces for music, arts and crafts, and a small auditorium and cafetorium in the center of the building. One end of the building contains the elementary school classrooms and library. The recreation facilities, shared by community and pupils, are located at the opposite end where they can be opened independently of the rest of the building. Community facilities not used by the school—public library, meeting rooms, and clinic—are clustered in a separate corner.

The community areas, most often agency offices, are also often separated from the shared areas. This clustering fosters interagency cooperation and makes it easier for visitors to use several agency services. Although not usually the original intent, most social service agencies operate during 9 to 5 office hours. When this occurs, the agency wing can also be closed when not in use.



The three-story Marie Reed Learning Center in Washington, D.C., is zoned by floors. The elementary learning areas and library are located on the top floor which is used by the school only. Spaces accessible from the main entry level are used by the school and community. These include several rooms used as lounges, dining areas, and meeting rooms, an arts and crafts room, and an auditorium. The shared recreation facilities on the lower level are also accessible from the main entry. A separate area with its own entrance houses two agencies offering services primarily to community people—a children's medical clinic and a day care center.



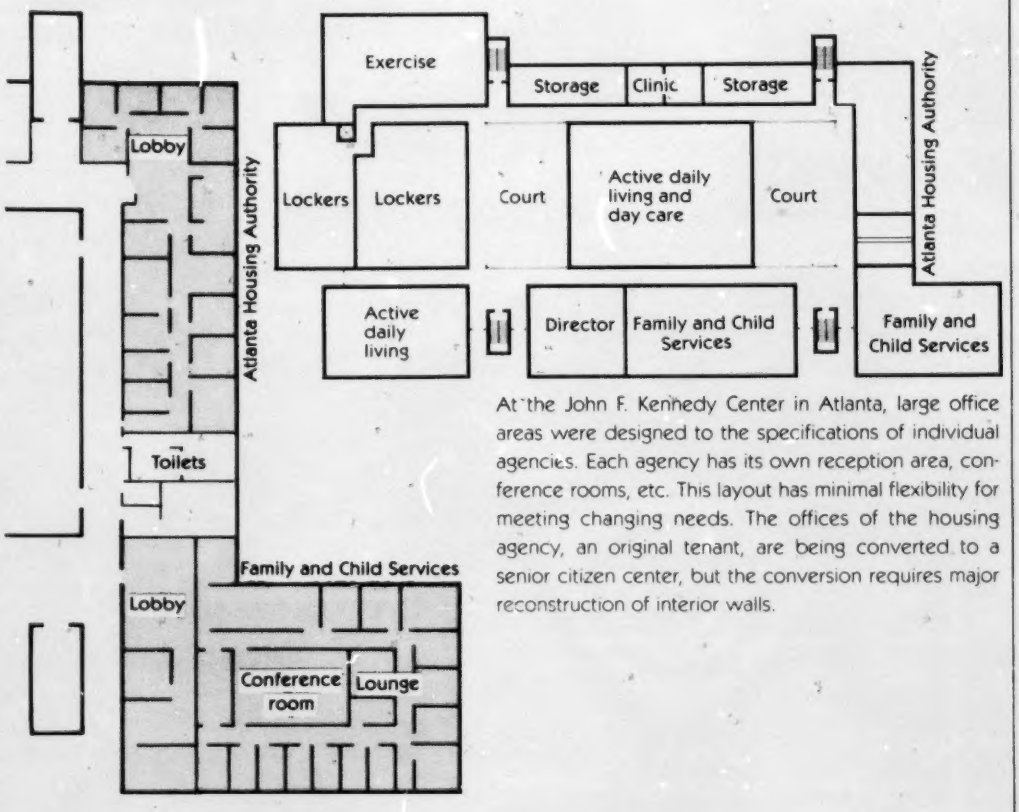
Each building at the Britannia Centre has more than one function, and all buildings are shared by the community and school to some degree. For example, one building houses the retired citizens center, the elementary school gym and lunchroom, which are also used by the community, and the preschool center which also has after-school programs and childminding services. The music room, family activities room, and arts and crafts room in the elementary school building are also heavily used by the community.

Agency sharing of community spaces

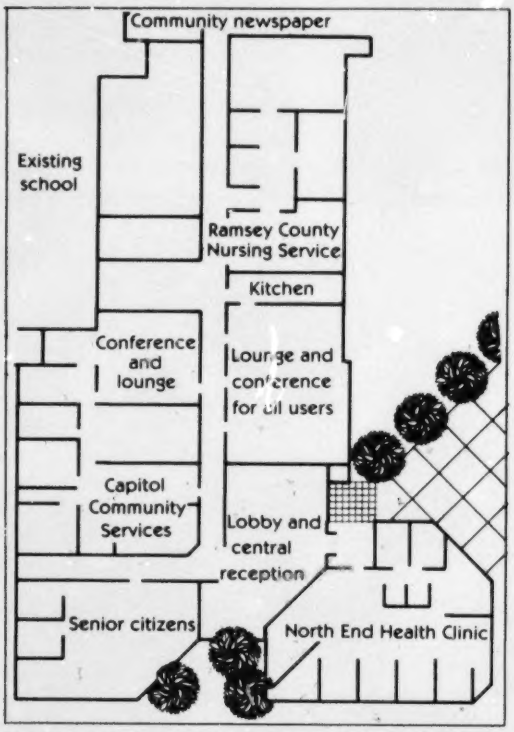
A second level of design strategy relates to the degree that agencies share space within areas that are primarily community spaces.

At one end of the spectrum, agencies are housed in separate spaces and offer services fairly independently of each other. Each agency rents its facilities on a full-time basis, and space is often designed to meet the specifications of each tenant. Some spaces with the same functions, such as waiting areas and conference rooms, are often duplicated for each agency.

At the other end of the spectrum, space is divided on the basis of function, and each agency or organization uses space only when needed. Complex scheduling is necessary to coordinate activities, and costs are shared by the time and space used. The Britannia Centre is an example of shared agency use of common facilities.



At the John F. Kennedy Center in Atlanta, large office areas were designed to the specifications of individual agencies. Each agency has its own reception area, conference rooms, etc. This layout has minimal flexibility for meeting changing needs. The offices of the housing agency, an original tenant, are being converted to a senior citizen center, but the conversion requires major reconstruction of interior walls.



The North End Multi-Service Center in St. Paul demonstrates some of each strategy. Each agency has its own defined territory with a separate reception area. However, a major section of the center contains shared lounge/conference areas and there is a central reception and waiting area as well. The floor plan is easily adaptable to other configurations.

Energy conservation

Energy costs for operating school facilities have increased 150% in the last five years, and energy management has become a high priority with administrators. Effective energy conservation depends upon the design and construction of a building, and its day-to-day operation.

If the community school center is designed in zones—school, community, shared—that can be shut down independently, energy costs can be lowered by having to heat, cool, and light only those sections in use. Additional investment in original construction can save energy in the long run. These investments include circuitry for zoning utilities, insulation, automatic controls for heating and ventilation, operable sash and double-glazed windows, and exterior shading of window walls on the south and west.

Careful site design, building configuration, building shell, and equipment specification can all contribute to energy efficient facilities.

Access for disabled people

Access for disabled people must be considered whether or not the center will offer special programs for them. Federal* and many state laws mandate that programs and services be accessible to all people.

Although these laws do not require that every portion of the building be accessible, all its services and programs must be accessible. In new buildings, architectural design can eliminate barriers by providing ramps or elevators, wide doorways, and adapted toilets. Work surfaces, storage, drinking fountains, switches, and other details should be designed for use by everyone.

In existing buildings, a combination of design modifications and alternative accessible locations for services may be necessary.

Planning and design assistance is available from state education departments and state agencies dealing with the handicapped. ■

*The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112), especially Section 504, mandates that all federally funded programs and activities be accessible to handicapped people. The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-142) deals not only with accessibility to regular services, but with provision of special services for handicapped students.

Design details: Entrances

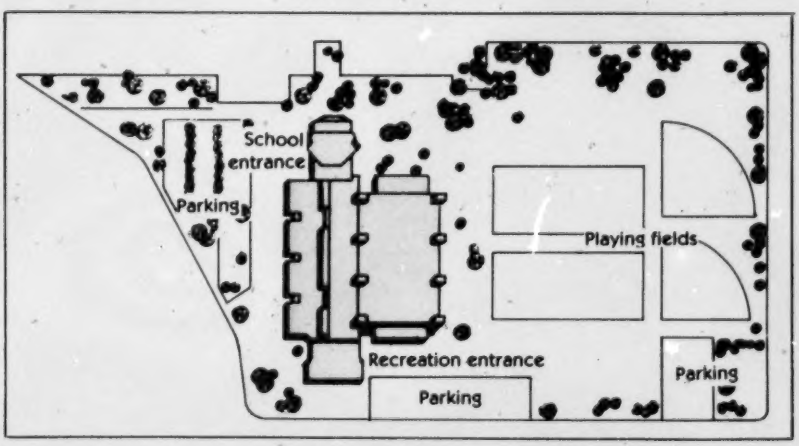
In suburban and rural areas most community users arrive at the center in automobiles, and school children arrive by bus, bicycle, or on foot. Parking usually has to be accommodated within the site boundaries, and zoning regulations usually require more parking spaces for a center than for only a school.

To avoid the unappealing sight of a single large parking lot, and also to direct users to the right area, functionally different areas are often provided with separate entrances and parking. Centers in less densely populated areas are more likely to have horizontal separation of functions, so that community and school spaces are located at opposite ends of the building.

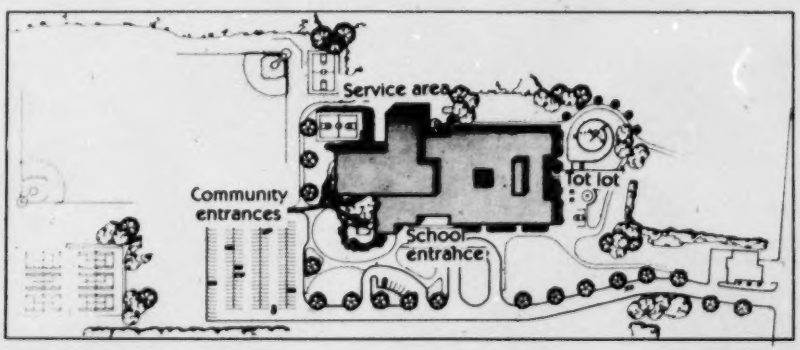
In urban areas, most people walk to community school centers, or leave a car or bus nearby and arrive on foot. Because urban centers are more likely to have vertical separation of functions, with school space on upper floors and shared space on the ground floor, school children and community residents often share the same entrance.

Urban centers intended to draw together two neighborhoods are often designed with a major pedestrian route through the center. Since routes fit into pedestrian networks in the surrounding community, there is a main entrance at each end of the building's central corridor or commons area. The Human Resources Center in Pontiac was designed around this concept. ■

The Thomas Jefferson center in Arlington has one entrance to the school portion of the facility and another to the recreation complex. Reception and control areas are located inside each entrance. Parking areas are located near each entrance. Additional parking is also available near the playing fields and tennis courts.



The Riverton School in Portland, Maine, has a number of entrances. The major school entrance is located next to a car and bus drop-off area. Parking is provided at the end of the building where community facilities (library, meeting rooms, health clinic, sports facilities) are located.



Design details: Reception

A reception lobby inside a main entrance serves several functions. It accommodates a receptionist who welcomes visitors unfamiliar with the layout of the center and the services available and directs them to the right areas.

A reception area is an important security control, particularly in a large center. If every person entering the building has to pass through the lobby, the receptionist can question strangers. This is a gentle yet effective means of challenge.

The area can also serve as a more overt means of control when sign-in procedures are used. One center requests people to sign their name and destination, and uses this system to control the number of people in any one area. At other centers, evening users are required to leave their membership cards at the desk.

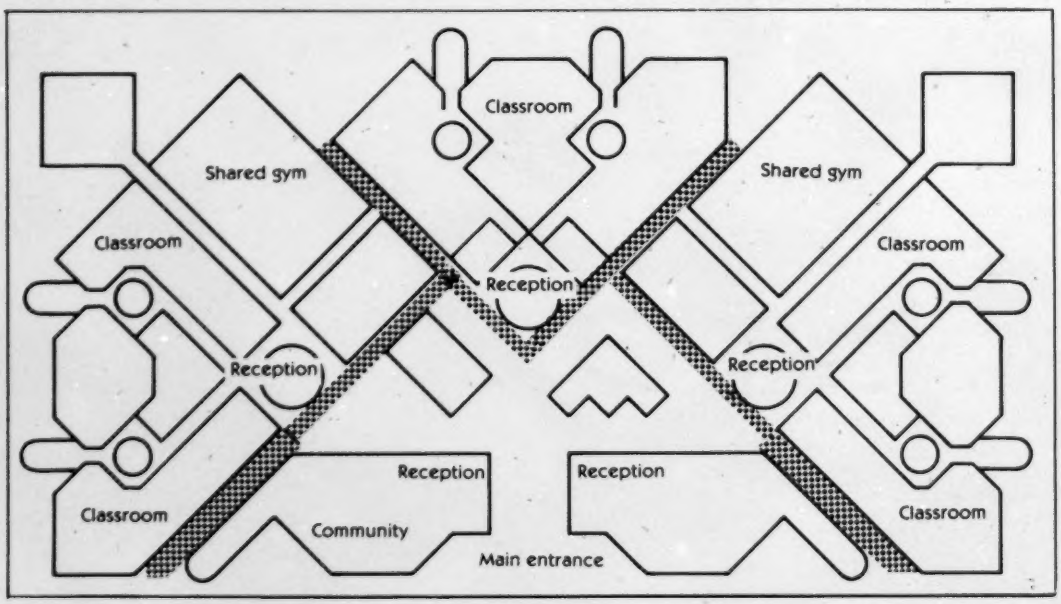
The level of control can be varied. If during the day there is little need for security, the receptionist can simply welcome people and answer questions. If the need for security measures is greater at night, sign-in procedures can be used.

In order for a reception lobby to be practical, administrative offices should be located near the entrance, adjacent to the lobby. The receptionist is often a member of the administrative staff, and has secretarial duties that cannot be performed unless the reception desk and office are together.

This is an important detail. Many community school centers designed with administrative offices in the middle of the building have placed reception booths or desks in entrance hallways, and have found the solution less than satisfactory.

It is best to have one main entrance, or several entrances opening onto a single lobby, to have an effective reception area. Large centers with widely separated entrances opening onto corridors cannot provide good entrance control. Some small centers, such as Riverton, in Maine, are designed with some entrances opening directly into agency spaces so that the agency can monitor visitors.

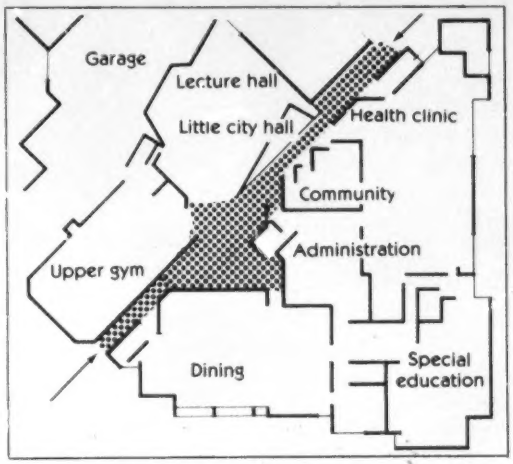
The main entrance to the Hans Christian Andersen School in Minneapolis (below) illustrates a well-thought-out reception plan. ■



Design details: Interior orientation

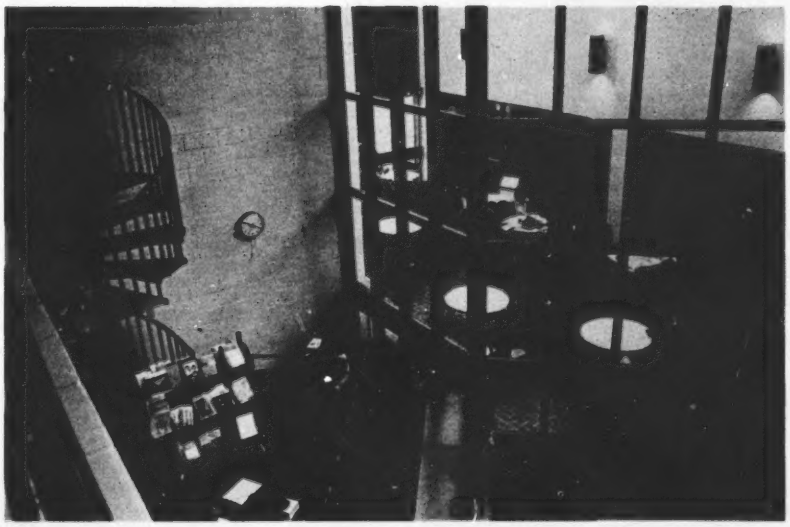
Because community users cannot be expected to be familiar with the center's layout, the design should help people to orient themselves. Several strategies help to achieve this objective:

- a well-identified main entrance with reception lobby
- a directory of spaces and services located within view of each entrance
- clustering of major community service areas around a lobby or corridor
- directional signs located at hall junctions or stairwells where users have to make decisions
- simple corridor layout
- windows between interior spaces so that people can see where they are in relationship to other areas. ■



Design details: Corridors

Many variations on traditional hallways are found in community school centers. Some centers are designed to minimize expensive corridor space, others have built street-like corridors, complete with glass storefronts. Community services are frequently located along these public corridors, and the use of windows creates a sense of warmth and openness. Corridors are also widened into lounges and sitting areas in some centers so that they serve more functions and make livelier spaces. ■



At the Port Hawkesbury center (right) the public and school library overlooks a corridor which is widened into a sitting area. On the far side, windows overlook the swimming pools. At New North (top right) the central corridor widens into a 2-story atrium. At the Whitmer center in Pontiac (above) the main corridor has windows on all sides.

Design details: Modifying traditional spaces

Cafeterias

School cafeterias are usually inefficient in the use of space. They accommodate a large number of students during a short period of time, and remain empty the balance of the day. With limited budgets, community school centers (or schools alone) have to modify cafeterias so that they can be used for more than one purpose.

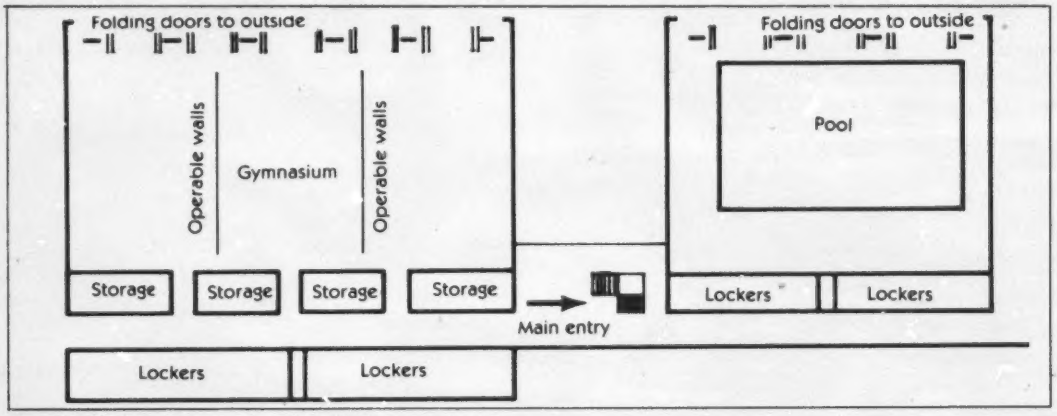
The traditional cafeteria at the Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and Community Center has been replaced by a series of small areas located along a corridor. The boundaries of these areas are formed by the students' lockers. They are furnished with small round tables and chairs, and when not in use for lunch are used for informal meetings, tutoring, and studying. The same amount of space that would be used by a single large cafeteria can comfortably serve a variety of functions.

The New North Community School also has a modified cafeteria design that allows for other uses. The cafeteria space is almost an extension of the center's main 2-story atrium. It is a sprawling, carpeted space of irregular shape, furnished with round tables and chairs.

Gymnasiums

The traditional gymnasium has also been modified in community school centers to better meet the needs of school and community. Two trends are visible. One is the development of large gymnasiums with seating for games, exhibitions, and community events. Frequently these big gymnasiums are built with a floor surface that can accommodate many activites, including roller skating.

The second trend is for numerous activities to occur simultaneously. Gyms in traditional schools usually accommodate two large classes at a time. In community school centers, space is required for many activities, which may include calisthenics, dance classes, karate or judo, weight lifting, and volley ball. Some centers accomplish this with several rooms in addition to a gymnasium; others divide huge gymnasiums into several areas. ■



New North Community School, Springfield, Massachusetts

Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and Community Center, Arlington, Virginia

Design details: New kinds of spaces

The new types of services and delivery are being developed by community school centers which require changes to be made in the design of the facilities. For example, new spaces and management have had to be arranged for centers that serve meals to the community, staff, and students.

At the Paul Laurence Dunbar Community High School in Baltimore, the school operates a small cafeteria near the community service wing which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner to the public as well as staff. A commercial public restaurant is an integral part of the Whitmer center in Pontiac. Britannia has a small coffee shop and a snack bar at the ice skating rink, both operated by a concessionaire. And the center in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, includes a take-out snack bar. ■

Storage requirements for shared use

Spaces that are shared by groups, or used for a variety of purposes, require more storage facilities than single-use spaces. The need for storage is often underestimated, and adding it after the center is built is often unsatisfactory because rooms were not made large enough. Thus the administrators have to decide whether adding the needed storage balances the disadvantage of the resulting cramped rooms.

Although built-in storage is an efficient use of space, it is rarely provided. The initial cost is minimal compared with the benefits of long-term livability. No single part-time user is likely to provide such storage.

Three types of storage facilities should be provided.

Outer clothing All spaces open to community use, but particularly swimming pools and gymnasiums, need storage for outer clothing. Students will also need extra storage space for coats and boots since gym lockers are usually small. Some centers include separate community locker rooms.

Program equipment and materials Each program providing its own equipment and materials will need storage space between sessions. Even if materials and equipment are shared, as they might be in an art room or workshop, separate space should be provided for each person's unfinished project.

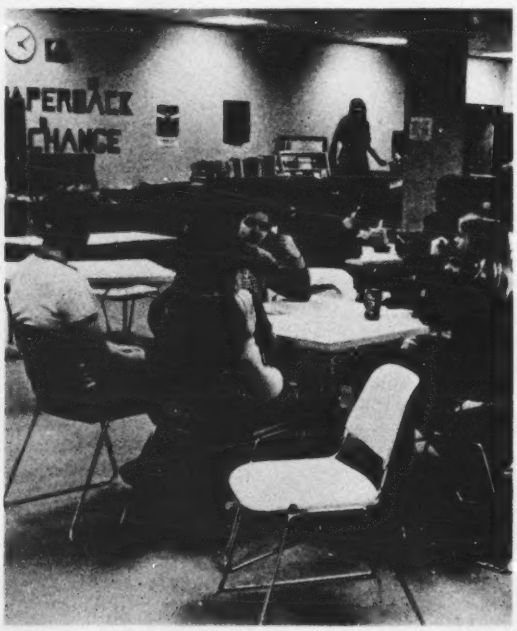
Office equipment and supplies Agencies sharing offices often need locked storage space for their client records, supplies, and perhaps even office machines. For example, Atlantic City is now installing locked cabinets for medical supplies needed by each program sharing the clinic. ■

Furnishing for shared use

Although agencies having sole jurisdiction over particular spaces can be expected to furnish their spaces, the furnishing of shared spaces creates problems. If an organization only uses a space on a part-time or temporary basis, it will probably provide only minimal furnishings.

Yet the quality of furnishings affects people's reactions to the activities of the agency and the center. If one objective of the center is to avoid looking institutional, couches and other informal furnishings can help convey the message. Thus the center should provide basic furnishings to get the best use out of shared spaces. If the capital outlay is significant, it might be possible to prorate the cost through rental fees.

Space sharing in elementary schools presents the additional problem of providing furniture scaled to children and to adults. A library designed for joint use may have to have several sizes of furniture, or an art room might have to use adjustable stools. ■



Designing for changing needs and growing demands

Demands for space in community school centers grow enormously after the center has opened. Without exception, center coordinators find themselves overwhelmed with requests for space from community people, from groups formed since the center was planned, from agencies with newly-funded programs and no place to house them, and even from private and governmental agencies that originally were not interested in being part of the center.

Over and over again we hear, "There's just not enough space....We're too crowded, busting at the seams....We need space—we could use twice what we've got....Lot's of groups have asked for space, but we just don't have room for them." These comments are heard in all kinds and sizes of centers.

Reallocation of tenant space

Tenant spaces cannot be rearranged easily unless the building is designed with a flexible layout. One way of dealing with increased demand is periodic reassessment of all programs and space requests. All agencies and organizations seeking regular use of the center, including incumbents, make new applications. A broad-based committee reviews applications in light of current community needs and resources, with no preference given to existing tenants. The new allocation plan may award tenants more or less space than before, exclude some, and include new tenants.

For this strategy to be practical, the layout of office spaces must also be flexible to allow for reallocation of small areas, such as a single office. It must also allow for drastic reorganization of allocations.

As a general rule, clusters of offices should be kept small, and offices should open onto public spaces, such as lounges or reception areas. Large clusters of offices along interior corridors, which might be acceptable for a single large agency, would be difficult to allocate among several agen-

cies. The distance between public spaces and inner offices would be too great. Similarly, more doors between adjacent rooms than would ordinarily be provided will increase flexibility in space allocation.

Greater shared use of space

Shared space is used more continuously and more intensively than space leased to a single tenant. Therefore as demand for space increases, centers can get greater use of their space by not renewing leases for individual tenants and, instead, granting shared scheduled use of space.

Full-time rental might even be planned for the first year or two of a center's operations to assure meeting operating expenses, with the understanding that all spaces will be shared after the center is well-established. If there turns out to be great demand for part-time use of spaces, agencies requiring full-time use might be requested to move to nearby buildings on a straight rental basis. Part-time and occasional use of facilities are services a community school center can offer that are difficult to find elsewhere.

The design of centers should allow for a shift to greater shared use of space. Easily shared rooms, such as conference rooms and staff lounges, should be accessible from public areas even if they are originally allocated to a single tenant.

Building additions

Most centers are not built with future additions in mind. And, in any case, it is often a political impossibility to extend one because a community is more likely to build another center in a different part of town to serve another group of residents.

Nevertheless, some designs lend themselves to additions better than others. A large, monumental building like the JFK Center in Atlanta is difficult to add to. But the Britannia Centre, which is a collection of small buildings, could easily accommodate more buildings. If future additions are contemplated, they should be considered when selecting the original site.

Use of other facilities

If demand exceeds availability of space in a center, it may be possible to expand by coordinating programs with other community facilities or by acquiring space in nearby buildings.

Many of the Boston Community Schools coordinate programs with other organizations in the community, such as YWCAs and YMCAs, Boys Clubs, churches, and settlement houses. Networks of available community spaces are being jointly developed and used by many agencies. Greater coordination among existing facilities can effectively increase space available for community use.

Centers may also be able to acquire space in other buildings. The Quincy Community School Council runs a preschool program in an old office building across the street from the new center. At Dunbar, several city agencies rent space in a nearby shopping center. These agencies are members of Dunbar's interagency council and participate in joint programs and referrals with agencies within the Dunbar building. ■

Checklists for planning and designing facilities

The following questions should be answered during the course of the design process.

The building program

- ☐ Does the program provide adequate guidance for the architect?
- ☐ Are there ambiguous statements which could be misinterpreted?
- ☐ Are budget and other constraints clearly stated?
- ☐ Have all relevant zoning, building, and health codes and regulations been consulted?
- ☐ Do all participants, including community residents and organizations not contributing construction funds, understand and agree with the plans?
- ☐ Will the facility described in the program work well with the planned administrative system?

The site

- ☐ Is the site accessible to the people it is intended to serve? Is it easily accessible to people travelling by public transportation, car, bicycle, foot?
- ☐ Is there adequate space for parking, playing fields, playgrounds and other outdoor needs?
- ☐ Will the outdoor areas meet community needs?
- ☐ Do site design and building configuration relate well to the surrounding neighborhood?
- ☐ Is there room for future expansion? If not, are there facilities nearby which might be developed?

Building design strategies

- ☐ Are the areas for school use and community use located so that their activities will not interfere with each other?
- ☐ Will areas not open all the time be located so that they can be closed off when not in use? Conversely, are areas that will be open at all times conveniently located?
- ☐ Are community spaces clustered?
- ☐ Are community spaces designed for a maximum of sharing—in the future as well as the present?
- ☐ Is the building accessible to disabled people?
- ☐ Is the building design energy efficient?
- ☐ Are utilities zoned so that portions of the building can be heated and lighted independently?

Design details

- ☐ Are entrances located strategically for the building layout and the surrounding neighborhood?
- ☐ Is there a well-identified main entrance with a reception lobby to help community users and provide building security?
- ☐ Are there building directories and signs?
- ☐ Is the layout easy to understand? Can you see from one area to another?
- ☐ Has the best use been made of corridor space?
- ☐ Are there informal places to sit?
- ☐ Has the design of traditional spaces been modified to allow for other uses?
- ☐ Have radical departures from tradition, including commercial food service, other commercial spaces, and housing, been considered to see if they would be beneficial? If they have been considered and rejected, is it for good reason and not just out of tradition?
- ☐ Has enough built-in storage space been provided to allow for maximum sharing of spaces?
- ☐ Have locker rooms, showers, and toilets been provided for community use?
- ☐ Are shared spaces to be comfortably furnished so they can serve and provide a pleasant setting for a variety of uses?

Designing for changing needs and growing demands

- ☐ Are spaces laid out to allow for incremental and drastic changes in space allocation?
- ☐ Can spaces designed for renting to one tenant be changed later to shared use? ■

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